

CHAPTER 6

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The construction and operation of the proposed action or any of the alternatives would result in some unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. The following is a description of these impacts grouped by topic.

Noise. During construction, daytime noise would increase in residential areas located near the transmission line right-of-way (ROW) and in areas near the ROW used for recreation. Since this impact is associated with the construction phase it would be short-term and temporary.

Waste Management. Construction of the project would result in the generation of small quantities of solid and hazardous wastes that could decrease the life of existing landfills and increase shipments to *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act* (RCRA)-permitted treatment and disposal facilities. Operation of the project would result in the generation of small quantities of municipal solid waste, such as paper and plastic wrapping materials from new equipment.

Erosion. Construction of the transmission line could potentially impact a small amount of prime farmland soils. This would include compaction of these soils and damaging the soil structure during excavation. The burying of soil and loss of soil productivity cannot be avoided in the action alternatives.

With construction of access roads it would be impossible to avoid increased water use and water yield from the aquifer. The point of delivery of that water can be chosen to mitigate the problems of localized increased yield. In addition, increases in soil erosion could occur as a result of construction of all proposed facilities. During the construction phase localized erosion could increase above natural levels and soil would be deposited downslope. This process continues after construction, with decreasing intensity until a stable condition is reached and drainages have adjusted to new hydrologic gradients. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would minimize erosion impacts during construction, and revegetation of construction roads would mitigate long-term impacts.

Water Resources. Potential increase in flood heights in the Santa Cruz River due to expansion of the South Substation within the 100-year floodplain would be unavoidable.

Air Quality. Vehicle and fugitive dust emissions would occur primarily during project construction. For all alternatives vehicle emissions cannot be avoided from continued motor vehicle access to project maintenance roads.

Biological Resources. Law enforcement and search-and-rescue needs would increase relative to increases in access to the area and potential increased human use of the area. Increased access to the area has the potential to disturb biological resources. Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP) would maintain locked gates to new roads required for project maintenance to limit public access. Construction and operation of the proposed project would cause temporary and permanent loss and disturbance to existing native and nonnative plant communities and loss of habitat for terrestrial animal populations.

Cultural Resources. Cultural resources present in the affected areas could be adversely impacted by construction of the proposed project. Increased access to the proposed project area has the potential to disturb cultural resources. TEP would maintain locked gates to new roads required for project maintenance to limit public access.

Recreation and Visual. Since portions of each alternative would be visible to some local residents, visitors on and off the Coronado National Forest, and people traveling on portions of Interstate 19 (I-19) and other area roads, the proposed project would have an adverse long-term impact on the viewshed. This would alter the recreational setting in the vicinity of the proposed project.